

A Selection of Letters from Brother Owen Allred

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AN ISSUE OF PRIESTHOOD AUTHORITY

GOD'S TRUE REPRESENTATIVE,

OR

SELF-APPOINTED LEADER?

by

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For some time I, Owen A. Allred, have wanted to make a written statement concerning the proper use and misuse of priesthood. Through his prophets, the Lord has given clear direction regarding the manner in which priesthood authority is to be administered upon the earth. As we all know, or should know, priesthood administrations are acceptable to the Lord when men follow the guidelines He established. I say this because of certain happenings that I have experienced in living the fulness of the gospel today. I want to make a specific record of some of those events in order to illustrate misunderstanding and misuse of priesthood by some who have been among us. It is important that we properly understand priesthood procedure as the Lord revealed it through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Before going into more detail, I want to state first of all that I am not writing this by any means to vindicate myself, my actions, or the priesthood position to which I have been called. This is simply a matter of understanding priesthood procedure and of staying within the bounds of those guidelines which God revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith. These must be supported and maintained. And I write this because it is also a matter of the need to recognize accountability to those who preside over us. There are those who have been deceived by the false teachings of several men who have appointed themselves to independently lead in priesthood work. We must be able to recognize this when it happens.

As we know, some of us have been commissioned to keep the fulness of the priesthood and the fulness of the gospel alive upon the earth, and we are trying to do so. So many, many things have happened over the last 25 years since dear Rulon C. Allred passed away and left the work of priesthood leadership in my charge. I have felt from the beginning, even when Joseph W. Musser called me to the apostleship, that I was not qualified for this holy calling. But since Rulon placed this responsibility upon my head, I have done the very best I can. Although I have made many mistakes, I have still done the very best I can to work according to the revelations from heaven and the teachings of the prophets who have gone before me, from the Prophet Joseph Smith down to Joseph W. Musser and my brother, Rulon.

We definitely believe that we must be governed entirely by the revelations from heaven, those given through the Prophet Joseph Smith. He is the prophet and restorer, the head of this dispensation. He still holds the keys to that office and calling, and he will hold them forever. The revelations given to the Prophet Joseph clearly establish correct rules and regulations with regard to Priesthood procedures. These were adhered to up to around the 1890 Manifesto. Since then, proper Priesthood work in several instances has

drifted off into improper changes, until many revelations from heaven no longer seem to matter to many Latter-day Saints. It seems that the "inspirations" of men now supersede those clear revelations, until disagreements and confusion have resulted.

I do not want to go into anything pertaining to the activities of the L.D.S. Church as to the signing of the 1890 Manifesto, because we as a people understand that the Manifesto was not a revelation from heaven, but rather a statement from Wilford Woodruff given for expediency. It was issued to save the Church temporally. But at the same time, it broke the promise from heaven that God would lead, guide, protect and fight the battles of this people if we would go forward and keep the commandments.

I want to focus entirely on what has been done by those representing the Priesthood itself. Did Brigham Young follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Joseph by perpetuating the same principles and doctrines taught by the Prophet? Did John Taylor, Heber C. Kimball, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, etc.? Their own words and actions clearly indicate that they did.

Joseph the Prophet said, "See to it...that you do not betray the revelations of God, whether in the Bible, Book of Mormon, or Doctrine and Covenants, or any other that ever was or ever will be given and revealed unto man in this world or that which is to come" (Smith, Teachings, p. 156). One of those revelations "betrayed" by several men who have independently assumed the right to perform ordinances, is found in Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord states in verse 7: "And verily I say unto you, that...all covenants, contracts, bonds...that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise...through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and *there is never but ONE on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred*) are of no efficacy, virtue, or force...."

So we can see that the ordinances and performances by those men who want to become independent and be a law unto themselves are invalid. Their works do not have approval. They have refused accountability to the one man God has called to preside over the priesthood keys. And those who will not be accountable for their acts perpetrate a tragedy in the lives of their followers. Neither the giver nor the receiver of those ordinances is attached to the true vine. Sadly, those receiving invalid ordinances think they have received something when they have nothing.

We are looking forward to the House of the Lord being set in order, and yet we as a people, both church and Priesthood, are out of order so far that it is a wonder that God could even think of us, let alone want to try to help us in our disobedience. Certainly many do not abide by the revelations and instructions received through the Prophet Joseph Smith. There seems to be little or no respect for the priesthood itself. Priesthood authority is a privilege given to us to use as the Lord has outlined. We cannot just function in priesthood work as we choose to, doing whatever we want to do with teachings and ordinances. This is not according to the revelations from heaven as the Prophet Joseph restored them. Is it acceptable to the Lord for us to go outside priesthood guidelines and do things according to our own "revelations"? Or are we in truth involved with self-aggrandizement.

For instance, following the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and other leaders of this dispensation taught and strictly practiced the priesthood order Joseph Smith established. Among the very first principles of order was the fact that one man, and one man only, presides over the keys of priesthood. He presides over all other priesthood bearers. It is unlawful for anyone to assume the freedom to go about teaching or administering any ordinances whatsoever without the commission or knowledge and approval of that man who presides over the keys of priesthood. This is order. Even if a man holds the apostleship or has fulness of priesthood, he still cannot become an exception to the rule. He will be cut off—or will cut himself off. This was demonstrated in the early days of the restoration. In our day as in the early days, several men have volunteered themselves to be an exception to the Prophet Joseph's established system of correct order. But they have no authority, nor do any of their works.

History records some interesting examples of what I am talking about. We read that God chose Jesus in pre-earth life to be our Leader—Lucifer rebelled, wanting to be the leader. God spoke to Adam—Cain rebelled, wanting to be the leader. God chose Jesus on earth—Judas rebelled, wanting his own way. God spoke to Joseph Smith—Sidney Rigdon (and others) rebelled, wanting to be the leader. And so it goes.

I want to contrast that with some statements made by a few of the early leaders of Mormonism. First of all, with regard to the false teaching that anyone who holds apostleship or fulness of priesthood can go about independently ordaining others to office, holding separate meetings, giving endowments and ordinances, etc., without the knowledge and consent of the one who presides over all keys, please note the following:

Brigham Young: "...Many imbibe the idea that they are capable of leading out in teaching principles that never have been taught. They are not aware that the moment they give way to this hallucination, the devil has power over them to lead them on to unholy ground...As I have already observed, comparatively few learned in the days of Joseph that he was *placed between the people and God*, that they had no more right to dictate him than they had to dictate the angel Gabriel, that they had no more business to interfere with him, or call him to an account, than we have to call to an account the angel Gabriel" (Journal of Discourses, vol. 3, p. 318). Many in our day have fallen into this same trap.

Heber C. Kimball: "I am not the leader—I am not the Prophet, nor the chief Apostle. I do not hold the keys independently. *I have no keys, only what I hold in brother Brigham*...Brother Brigham is my leader: he is my Prophet, my Secr, and my Revelator; and

whatever he says, that is for me to do; and it is not for me to question him one word, nor to question God a minute. Do you not see?" (*Ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 32–33).

Jedediah M. Grant: "Do you suppose that I can be saved by *standing alone*, or that brother Heber can, or by attempting to use our Apostleship *independent* of brother Brigham? We have sense enough to know that *we have no power, only as we are one with him*. Or can the Twelve, or any one else have any power, only as they are one with brother Brigham? NO" (*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 128). The Lord chose several men in our day who have broken this law of priesthood order, and therefore they have broken themselves, lost their priesthood and led others astray.

George Q. Cannon: "There is but one man, as you have often heard, at a time on the earth who holds this authority. There may be others who have this authority also; and I thank God there are many who hold this authority—that is the authority of the Apostleship, but *they hold it subordinate* to the man who holds the keys. *They cannot exercise this authority only as he shall consent or delegate or authorize them to do so*. There is but one man who has the power to exercise this authority, to stand, as it were, in God's stead, to be His voice unto the people, and that is the man who stands at the head and who is President, and who holds the keys by virtue of the appointment of God. God places him there. It is not man's act" (*Ibid.*, vol. 24, p. 274).

Strangely enough, there are those seemingly uninformed men who justify themselves in usurping priesthood authority by citing Nephi who held priesthood on the American continent, separate from the apostles in Judea. They seem to forget that the Lord himself led Lehi to this land and visited the Nephites. He sanctioned their priesthood baptisms and other works, just as he did the works of the apostles in Judea. Righteous men on both continents were called of the Lord to lead and be a blessing to His people. They were not men who rose up on their own and originated their own calling and authority—in contrast to some men who have been among us. Another fact of the matter is that though there was legitimate priesthood established among the Nephites, they were nevertheless subject to the apostles called by Jesus in Judea. The Nephite apostles will be judged by the apostles of Judea in due process. And the Nephite apostles in turn will judge others, assisting the Lord in that program. And that is the program. No man is an island unto himself. Everyone has a legitimate head. If a man tries to bypass or to repudiate that head, the scriptures and the prophets imply that he has spiritually cut off his own head.

Brother Cannon also made it clear: "There can be no two channels; there is but one; God having chosen but one. Now, as long as we keep this in mind we are in no danger as a people—that is, if we keep it in mind and obey it" (*Ibid.*, vol. 24, pp. 364–365).

Speaking of the one man and the gift of receiving commandments and revelations, the Lord said that "...none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him; for if it be taken from him, he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead" (*Doct. & Cov.*, Sec. 43, v. 4). So even if the one man at the head transgresses sufficiently and loses his calling, he still retains the right to appoint a successor in his stead.

Joseph F. Smith: "It would be absolutely inconsistent, unreasonable and absurd to suppose that after God had called ONE man and appointed him to this work, that He should pass him by and go to somebody else to accomplish the same purpose" (*Ibid.*, vol. 24, p. 188).

President Joseph F. Smith also makes another very valid observation which particularly applies to some of the former priesthood bearers who go about performing invalid priesthood ordinances, with neither the knowledge nor consent of the one man presiding over the keys. He said: "...Men are easily deceived by seductive spirits that are abroad in the world. They are led to believe that something is wrong, and the next thing that transpires, they find themselves believing that they are chosen specially to set things right. It is very unfortunate for a man to be taken in this snare, for be it understood by the Latter-day Saints that as long as the servants of God are living pure lives, are honoring the priesthood conferred upon them, and endeavoring to the best of their knowledge to magnify their offices and callings, to which they have been duly chosen by the voice of the people and the priesthood, and sanctioned by the approval of God, so long as the Lord has any communication to make to the children of men, or any instructions to impart to His Church, *He will make such communication through the legally appointed channel of the Priesthood; He will never go outside of it, as long, at least, as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints exists in its present form on the earth.*" In addition, he said: "We can *accept nothing as authoritative* but that which comes directly through the appointed channel, etc." (*Ibid.*, vol. 24, pp. 188–189).

I am somewhat laboring this important point of fact, because there are many who have been led astray and are giving false justification for their actions. They either know they are wrong or are being deceived because of aspiring for position and ordinance, or because they feel something is wrong and justify themselves in bypassing God's legitimate priesthood channel. It will only lead to a dark future. There are many references to this important area of instruction and clear caution. Brigham Young also made the statement that the man who presides, "is laid down by the master workman as the conductor of the Holy Ghost to you. If you put that conductor out of its place, the connection is broken between you and the fountain of light" (*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 99). No man can ignore these clear instructions and teachings and not end up deceived by the adversary, losing priesthood, leading people astray, and thinking all is well between him and God.

The House of God must be in order. How should it be in order? After quoting the above-named prophets of earlier years, it is my added testimony that nobody does anything without the approval of the head of the priesthood, or there is no order. What do I

mean? I don't think being accountable to the one who presides over the keys of priesthood means that you can't eat a meal or cross the street or have family prayer without the approval of that man. It means that we can do nothing pertaining to the ordinances of the priesthood without the sanction and knowledge of our file leader. This order of priesthood should definitely be clear to everyone, having come down from the Prophet Joseph Smith and carried on by those succeeding him to our very day. This order was included also when President John Taylor set men apart in 1886 to keep the fulness of the priesthood and the gospel alive, including all the measures Joseph Smith restored, and which we must perform faithfully in their very proper order. We must be strict about this, or we will have very little order and a lot of chaos, with invalid ordinances being given.

Just to express my own personal experience, I know that some people today argue that there have been misinterpretations or mistakes in the revelations because, for example, there are several brethren who hold the keys of priesthood. The idea is that anybody who wants to correct those supposed mistakes in the revelations can go about doing as they wish because they hold the priesthood, possibly even the apostleship. In my lifetime and experience, I remember very distinctly that the laws of the priesthood were fully governed and controlled by Joseph W. Musser, the "one man" at the time whom the scriptures say has the right to preside and direct the functions of priesthood. This is the proper order. I saw things stay in order and in good order through the years—until some of the brethren in the Priesthood Council decided that Joseph Musser, who presided over the keys, didn't know what he was doing. They decided they had better rules, better procedures to control things. They wanted the priesthood to have more control over the personal lives of individuals in the group. This is, of course, what caused what is called "the split," and definitely Joseph Musser disowned or disfranchised all of the members of the old Council. He ended up calling another man, namely Rulon Clark Allred, to succeed him as President of the priesthood. Some of us acknowledged Brother Musser's position and authority to do that, and that Rulon had a legitimate calling and held the authority and responsibility given to him. Those former brethren of the Council followed Brother Musser, were accountable to him, and did nothing without his approval—until they decided Brother Musser was no longer qualified to lead them. The branches chose to break from the vine.

Another Council was called. The priesthood structure of one man presiding over all, of all things being done by and through the appointment of one man, was also held entirely valid and correct for priesthood procedure during the life of Rulon C. Allred. As is the typical pattern of things, there were also men during Rulon's life who decided they knew more than Rulon did. They now held position and priesthood and decided they had the right to do what they wanted to do. William L. Goldman, for instance, was one of those men making decisions on his own. He caused a lot of trouble and, through his insubordination, he took several families out of the priesthood work.

Rulon C. Allred was a very strong, dependable leader and had a great deal of wisdom. He had great knowledge of the fulness of the gospel. He was what I call a very powerful and wonderful leader. When he passed the authority that he held on to me, I did not feel that I had the qualifications Rulon had. And immediately there were those who felt that they had priesthood and could step in and govern things, because Owen did not have the ability to govern priesthood matters the way they decided things should be done.

John Ray was one of those who revolted against my counsel and advice. He was also against all of the other members of the Priesthood Council. He had to be dropped from the Council because of that, in addition to other serious matters.

It was finally revealed to us from the Lord that we had instruction and permission to give certain ordinances outside of the church and the temples controlled by the church. Some of the ordinances the church had either changed or abandoned entirely. This instruction was to maintain the fullness of the priesthood upon the earth. We were to maintain it as the Prophet Joseph Smith restored it. The Lord gave permission to do that. But immediately we had those among us who wanted to do more than that. One man in particular insisted that we had the right to do everything in the priesthood that we wanted to do. Others of the Council said we had the right to do only that which the Lord had instructed until we were directed to do more.

This one man in particular, Joseph B. Thompson, decided that he was going to start giving the apostleship to others beyond the Priesthood Council. I definitely opposed this, as did the rest of the Council members. But Joe insisted this was going to be done. It was brought to his attention that he, holding the apostleship, still did not have the right to do anything without the approval of the one presiding over the keys of priesthood. I might insert here that Apostle George Q. Cannon said that the wicked are going to have the effect of "causing you not to heed the man of God, the man who holds the keys of the Eternal Priesthood of God, the man chosen by eternity, by the Lord himself; it is for you to say whether you, by these devices, will no longer pay heed and attention to his counsels...I am glad that in the providence of God there is an opportunity given to all such to show their true characters..." (*Ibid.*, vol. 24, p. 367).

He goes on to add, "It is not my privilege to guide this ship. It is not my privilege to write revelations or commandments to this Church...much as I may be possessed of the revelations of Jesus, that is not a privilege which has been accorded unto me, nor has it been accorded unto *any other* Apostle, or officer, or member of this Church, but *one*, and that is the man whom God has chosen to hold the keys" (*Ibid.*, vol. 24, p. 367).

I might add here that the 1880 revelation brings out the principle that apostles may receive revelation, but they must present it to proper authority and act in harmony, not going about revealing it on their own. This, too, is part of priesthood order.

As I mentioned, Joseph B. Thompson began to insist that he had the right to do certain things as he chose. When we told him he did not, he said he had the same authority that Owen did, that he was called within 10 minutes after Owen was called. He said that just because Rulon appointed Owen as his successor, that didn't give Owen any more authority than Joe himself had. So Joe went about giving priesthood to other people without any approval whatsoever. He also decided all on his own that he had the authority to give others the second anointings. The directions to the priesthood, handed down from the Prophet Joseph Smith clear on down through every head of priesthood, including us today, were that the second anointings had to be done by revelation and by the man holding the keys of priesthood, or under his direction. No exceptions. No independent acts. Everything in proper order.

Joe insisted that this was not necessary and he was going to go ahead and give second anointings, which he attempted to do—unauthorized, unsanctioned—involving some of his sons and others. Robert LeFevre seems to follow this thinking and says Joe had this authority. Under whom? Joe! (Where are those who understand Priesthood law and processes! The Prophet Joseph taught truth by precept and example. I thank the Lord that there are some studied and valiant men and women who walk the true line.). Then Joe got into some problems and exploded when he was called to account for them. He refused to either listen or account for his actions that were clearly lacking in authority and approval. He liked to refer to Brigham Young, who had ordained one of his sons to the apostleship. Then Brigham Young told his brethren that he thought they had as much right to do the same for their sons. This, however, did not make the son a member of the Quorum of Twelve, nor were those brethren told that they could ordain a son without Brigham Young's knowledge and approval. Joe Thompson said he didn't have to have anyone's approval because of his own authority. This is totally false.

It wasn't long before Joe was asked to stand trial for several reasons, including insubordination and being out of harmony with the Priesthood Council, causing his apostleship to be in jeopardy. Joe immediately said there was no man on earth who had the authority to try him or to in any way question his authority or actions. He verbally cursed his brethren of the Council for even considering having him tried. We have to wonder why Joe would be immune to that action when even the Prophet Joseph Smith himself submitted to trial from both his brethren and his outside enemies. Even the Savior submitted to trial, and he was convicted. Yet, Joe Thompson claimed he had such authority that nobody had the right to question his actions or to judge him.

By his actions, he in effect appointed himself to be head of the priesthood, making priesthood decisions and not accounting to anyone. He apparently assumed that no one else was qualified. Then all on his own, he created his own procedures. He gave ordinances to others, or attempted to, most of whom were on the fringe of the priesthood work. Their priesthood head seemed to be themselves. The sad part is that Joseph B. Thompson caused other people to think they have something they simply don't have. And neither did he.

The Council has known and worked with Joe Thompson for some 40 years. His protégé, Jackson Ted Jessop, now building his own headless group in Arizona, was associated with this work for only something around 3 years or so, but he appointed himself to judge the Council brethren. He has unfortunately felt he was free to accept the call from Joe Thompson to follow Joe in the independent direction he was going. So the self-appointed man called another self-appointed man—to go where and do what? Perform mock ordinances. Ted seemed to feel he was far more qualified to judge Joe than members of the Council were, who knew Joe very, very well for 40 years. So Ted is accountable to absolutely no one, certainly no one who is in any better state than he is. Anyone independent of a true priesthood head is also necessarily independent of the blessings. These are only attainable in the stable, organized, God-sanctioned priesthood structure. Like Joe, Gerald Peterson, John Bryant and others, Ted Jessop has chosen to be a law unto himself. And it is very sad.

I say these things because I want this history as I have lived it to be understood and recorded. My desire is to defend the priesthood and the gospel principles, ordinances and procedures as the Prophet Joseph has taught us. These things are very hurtful to me, and they have been on my mind for many years.

I want to add that shortly before his death, Joe wrote a long letter acknowledging that Owen Allred held the keys of priesthood, and Joseph Thompson sustained Owen in that calling. Yet, at the same time he appointed himself to do as he wanted to do and did it outside the framework of priesthood structure. Because of that, there have been those in Utah who have no head except themselves, and another one in Arizona, Jackson Ted Jessop, in the same independent, headless situation. He chose to look for priesthood position and followed Joe Thompson. This is typical of those who left the Prophet Joseph and went off on their own. They acknowledge no one above themselves to whom they are accountable. Does Ted perhaps think that Owen Allred should report to him? What is the thinking? "I now have office and calling. You, Owen, hold the keys, but I have authority now without you and can carry on as I choose." Is this actually the thinking? It is a delusion. They can only perpetuate foolishness. Talk about the House of God being out of order! But on the other hand, sadly they cannot be members of the House of God, having repudiated God's priesthood leaders and His established order on earth.

This, again, is made clear by Heber C. Kimball, who simply stated the Lord's position on the standard to be perpetuated in His kingdom on the earth: "You are the people who have the privilege to acknowledge brother Brigham as our Governor and continue him in his office; and you also have the privilege, through your agency, to reject him, if you please; but it will be to your condemnation if you do, because he has got the keys of the kingdom; and the very moment you reject him, you cut yourselves off from the right of the Priesthood...If [my family] reject me, they reject their head; and, by so doing, they destroy their heirship to the head.... You reject your head, and if so, where is the body, and what will become of it? I will compare it to my body. Supposing the head is cast away, the body will die, won't it? Yes; and you will die just as quick as that, if you reject brother Brigham, your head"

(*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p.161).

The teachings of the founders of Mormonism are the same, and they are numerous. Another reference to this same issue of *one man* presiding over priesthood keys, to whom all others are accountable, was made by Franklin D. Richards: "Now, there is a feeling among mankind...a feeling of independence, a feeling of self-sufficiency, a feeling that we are capable of doing without counsel, and that we can do this and that as we think best. My brethren, the less of this feeling we carry with us, the safer and better for us and for the people we have to instruct. We should understand our dependence on God and *on our brethren who are placed over us in the Priesthood....*" (*Ibid.*, vol. 24, p.120).

Brother Richards then mentions the independent spirit and loss of Lyman Wight, and says: "This is the fate of those who think they can 'run' themselves and can 'run' the affairs of the Church and Kingdom of God separately and independent of their brethren...He abode *not* in the vine, and brought forth no fruit." Modern Lyman Wights only bring forth false fruit that cannot survive into eternity. Such are the works of some of our modern brethren with their independent spirit and acts of fruitless ordinations. Brother Richards further said, "There is no other way for men to have the love of Christ in them, to have the power of the Priesthood, to grow with God's Kingdom, but that they *abide in the vine*, be one with their brethren, keep fast to the truth, and derive their full share of the sap that comes from the roots *through the body of the vine*" (*Ibid.*, vol. 24, pp.120-121). Sadly, as Heber C. Kimball said, "All who profess to be Latter-day Saints will not be saved in the celestial world, for they cannot [or will not] abide the celestial law...." (*Ibid.*, vol. 11, p.146).

In Joe Thompson's and others' insistence upon performing ordinances independent of their priesthood head, disagreeing with the one presiding over keys of authority, they are forgetting the words of the Prophet Joseph himself: "I will inform you that it is contrary to the economy of God for any member of the Church, or any one, to receive instruction for those in authority higher than themselves...for the fundamental principles, government, and doctrine of the Church *are vested in the keys of the kingdom*" (Smith, *Teachings*, p.21). I repeat, one man, but one man presides over those keys, or there would be a mass of confusion.

How can we expect the blessings of heaven? How can we expect our callings and responsibilities to be recognized by God when we tell God what he can and what he can't do? Shall we tell him that his revelations are not necessarily correct, or that they are outdated? Can we say we know his Priesthood process is wrong, and we are going to appoint ourselves to be the judge? This is the history of apostasy from the beginning.

Men set themselves up today and say that Owen Allred had no right to judge Joe Thompson, and they also say the Council brethren had no right to judge Joe as a member of the Priesthood Council. Does it make better sense to say that Joe had the right to judge Owen Allred and the rest of his brethren of the Council, contrary to the words of the Prophet Joseph? And does it also make better sense that all on his own Joe set up the makings of an independent group, some of whom now give sacred ordinances all on their own? It appeared that Joe wanted to have his position on the priesthood Council and at the same time be independent of them and go about giving his private priesthood ordinations. It reminds me of the words of the Apostle James: "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8).

All these things go through my mind today as to what has gone on among our people. We have at least four other groups of people who supposedly are giving second anointings, making mockery of the Lord and his priesthood. Those brethren under the direction of the Prophet Joseph, those under the direction of Brigham Young, etc., who even had their second anointings and fullness of priesthood ordinances, did not go out on their own and give those ordinances without direction from their priesthood head. They had respect for God's program and respect for the man's position who presided over the keys. What makes any man, apostle or whatever, think he can do otherwise? How does a person *legitimately* start giving any ordinance without direction from his priesthood head? Where is the right to do that found in any scripture, teachings or action by the Prophet Joseph or his successors? Where are the keys of priesthood?

Is a self-appointment acceptable to God? It's an inescapable fact that Joe Thompson appointed himself to be a man of authority above anyone. And those who tend to aspire to position follow him. All these things go through my mind. I try to make some sense of the thinking of apostates from the truth, and it is just impossible. It is still true that you cannot convince a man against his will. But what is the holy and sacred will of God?

I am getting awfully old and have been very sick of late. I want to bring these things to the fore and make these thoughts part of our priesthood history. I want to express my testimony of the fullness of the gospel, that the rights and privileges of the priesthood, in addition to the restrictions, are just as much in order and in force today as they ever were in the days of our Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors. We read that God is an unchanging God, and his principles and ordinances do not change. It is clear that we have no right to usurp authority that has not been legitimately given. Those who do will find their works have turned to ashes. How can it be otherwise?

In the words of Heber C. Kimball with regard to his priesthood head, Brigham Young, "In him is every power and key of celestial life and salvation, pertaining to every person there is on this earth, and that is a principle which but few persons realize. You take away the keys that are with him, and with those who sustain him, and I would not give a dime for you. Sin to such a degree that brother Brigham and his counselors, and those who are associated with him—the Apostles of Jesus Christ—withdraw from your

midst, and I would not give a dime for all the salvation you have got; that is my faith" (Jour. of Disc., vol. 3, p.197).

Another essential thing to remember is the importance of priesthood lineage. No one can pop up out of the sagebrush and claim authority. Nor can anyone break off from the vine and claim authority to give callings or ordinances and expect God to recognize them. There must be legitimate descent of priesthood and calling and direction. Anything else is not the Lord's way of priesthood service and order. Anything else is sheer mockery.

I am reminded of this passage from Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants, verses 9 through 14: "Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name? Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed? And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was? I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment—that no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord.

"And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God. For whatsoever things remain are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me shall be shaken and destroyed."

As I said, whether it is John Ray, John Bryant, Gerald Peterson, Ted Jessop, Joe Thompson, or anyone else pursuing unlawful acts in the name of righteousness and priesthood, they perpetuate foolishness—and eternal disappointment is ahead unless there is repentance. This is true for all of us.

And to those who are in just such a condition, George Q. Cannon warns: "I wish to say that those who look for some increased manifestation of power to come in some form outside of that which we recognize as the government authority of the Church, are in danger of being deluded and of being led astray. Such persons, if there be any, and I am inclined to believe there are, are in just the condition that the adversary would like people to be in, that he may have influence with them ... *Joseph never ran before he was sent*" (Ibid., vol. 23, pp. 358–359).

Here is an additional item of history which is relevant to our subject. William Marks and Alpheus Cutler were given their second anointings in the days of Joseph Smith, but both apostatized. Marks was dropped from his position as Nauvoo Stake President by Brigham Young in October of 1844. He left several months later, eventually aligning himself with Joseph Smith III. Alpheus Cutler was excommunicated in 1851 and started his own church. George Miller received his second anointing in August of 1844 by Brigham Young, but he apostatized and was disfellowshipped in 1848. He eventually joined James J. Strang, another one who pursued his own calling. Despite receiving their second anointings, these men still had an obligation to follow and stay in harmony with their earthly priesthood head, or face disciplinary action. They chose, as have others in our day, to be independent of a mortal priesthood head, contrary to the Lord's program as the Prophet Joseph Smith restored it.

I want us to remember that such men as John Taylor, Heber C. Kimball, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith, etc., all may have had the second anointings that Joseph B. Thompson was so anxious to perpetuate on his own. But none of those men, having second anointings or not, presumed to step out of his place, make any claims of independence, or on his own give callings or ordinances without the express knowledge and approval of that man who presided over them. As Heber C. Kimball said, he was nothing except through his head and leader, Brigham Young. Being submissive to his priesthood head was a mark of honor and respect for President Young's office. It was also priesthood law and order, and it still is, that one man presides over the keys. The keys are held in common with the other apostles, but *one* man, the head of priesthood, *presides*. All others are subject to his direction and approval. This is the very clear pattern that the founding brethren established and followed. Nothing less is expected of us in the Lord's program, not if we have hope of celestial exaltation. I want to emphasize this to all of my brethren and to all mankind on earth before I go to the grave. I give this, my testimony of this priesthood authority and procedure, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

signed

Owen A. Allred

Dated: April-19-2002

hand dated

Letter from Owen Allred
To Governor Leavitt
and Attorney General Graham

August 15, 1998

Dear: Governor Leavitt and Attorney General Graham

I am the leader of the Apostolic United Brethren, (AUB), a religious organization with over 5,000 members, located primarily in Utah. As you may know, the AUB membership adheres to the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but believe in the doctrine of plural marriage as well. AUB members vote, pay taxes, serve in the military, educate their children, and do all the kinds of activities associated with the rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Recent media attention to activities of certain polygamist groups has given our members grave concern, not only regarding the crimes alleged, but also because it appears your offices and the press have unfairly implicated all polygamist organizations as perpetrators of abuse. This broad-brush approach is undeserving and should not be tolerated. After all, when prominent members of the LDS Church are caught perpetrating abuse, we don't see headlines such as "Graham: Utah to Prosecute Mormons for Crimes!"

We believe it is important that you receive some basic information regarding our religious beliefs, lifestyle, and philosophy of openness and freedom for our members directly from us, instead of receiving it through the filter of prejudice and suspicion which seems to have permeated recent news reports.

First let me say that AUB members devote themselves to the spiritual tenants of their religion, which includes devotion to God, respect for men, women, and children, the sanctity of marriage and family, and a fundamental belief in free agency. The doctrine of free agency requires every man and woman to make choices of his or her own free will and take responsibility for individual conduct. Consistent with our belief of free agency, the AUB does not arrange marriage between its members. We further view intermarriage between close relatives as an abomination of God's law. We discourage dating until the age of 17 and advise our young adult members to postpone considering marriage until their vocational or college education is obtained, or at least until the age of 21.

Toward this end, we offer scholarships and financial assistance when possible so our young members may complete their formal education. Marriage should be the result of love and commitment between consenting individuals, where women are deemed equal to men in every way. Only through the exercise of a person's free agency should a person decide whether to undertake the benefits and responsibilities of plural marriage, and whom to marry. Church leaders do not make these decisions for its members.

Central to our belief of free agency is the responsibility to become self-sufficient, law-abiding members of society. The AUB does not believe it is above governance by man but find it unfortunate that one of our fundamental religious beliefs was placed outside the law by what amounted to extortion by the federal government as a price of statehood over one hundred years ago.

Nevertheless, AUB members are required to abide by the law and we can point to a long history of openness and cooperation with law enforcement and social agencies when dealing with transgressions by our members.

It is troubling that our fellow Utah citizens and legislature have not yet found the courage to disavow anti-polygamy hypocrisy. While AUB citizens voluntarily marry and support their spouses and children out of a sense of deep spiritual and personal commitment, popular American culture promotes the idea of cohabitation outside of wedlock without commitment and single parent families have become the norm. Even worse, scoundrels such as Adham Kashoggi and his wives were welcomed to this State with open arms and invited to sample its many treasures. While our most prominent leaders courted this man and delighted in the curiosity of his multiple wives, Utah citizens are technically deemed criminals for engaging in the same practice of plural marriage.

Let me be clear: AUB members abhor violence, abuse, and neglect in any form. We condemn those who would manipulate sacred religious doctrine to coerce or intimidate others for personal or financial gain. We affirm our commitment to maintain cooperation with law enforcement agencies to assist in the prosecution of abuse, violence, and crime where they might occur. As we see it, this is the duty of any Christian.

Finally, the AUB discourages its members from seeking state and federal assistance such as food stamps and Medicaid. This is often difficult because the stigma accompanying our lifestyle makes it difficult to compete in the economic marketplace. However, AUB members prefer to provide assistance to one another rather than rely on government resources.

Considering our focus on God, family, education, and the American work ethic, AUB members have endured the hypocrisy of being denigrated as a 'cult' far too long. Interestingly, many distinguished citizens of this State boast proudly that a grandparent had several wives and numerous children, (rather like coming over on the Mayflower), while castigating those "weird" polygamists.

While it might be popular to disparage, ridicule, or persecute polygamists, the effect is to drive disaffected groups underground. Those groups are then left to operate unchallenged in a shadow of secrecy.

AUB members will not waiver in our open exercise of religious freedom, and we will continue to actively participate in social and religious development of this State. Therefore, we invite you to engage in a dialogue with religious groups such as ours so that we may work together on ways to best prevent the abuses alleged to have occurred in the Kingston clan.

We applaud your position that polygamists should be prosecuted no more or no less than other citizens who breach the law and look forward to continuing our commitment and cooperation with government leaders and law enforcement agencies to root out the abuse, intimidation, and violence left unchecked in secret groups. Please contact me if your offices desire any assistance, information, or education we may extend. Thank you.

Very truly yours,
OWEN ALLRED
Presiding Elder
Apostolic United Brethren
